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ABSTRACT

This report provides data on minorities in the juvenile justice system. Minority juveniles are significantly over-represented in the juvenile justice system. In 1997, minorities made up about one-third of the juvenile population nationwide but accounted for nearly two-thirds of the detained and committed population in secure juvenile facilities. For black juveniles, the disparities were most evident. Section 1 of this report discusses the fact that disproportionate minority confinement often stems from disparity at early stages of case processing. Section 2 looks at self-reported delinquent and deviant behaviors of youth varied by race and ethnicity. Section 3 discusses how juvenile arrests disproportionately involved minorities. Section 4 explains how in 1996, black juveniles were referred to juvenile court at a rate more than double that for whites. Section 5 explains how white juveniles were less likely to be detained than black juveniles and juveniles of other races. Section 6 discusses how minorities accounted for 7 in 10 youth held in custody for violent offenses. Section 7 examines how on the 1997 consensus day, minority offenders had been in residential placement longer than other juveniles. Section 8 explains that nationally, custody rates for black juveniles were substantially higher than rates for other groups. Section 9 discusses how males, 17-year-olds, minorities, and person offenders predominate among youth sent to adult prisons. (SM)

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1999 NATIONAL REPORT SERIES

Juvenile Justice Bulletin

DECEMBER 1999

Minorities in the Juvenile Justice System

As the Nation moves into the 21st century, the reduction of juvenile crime, violence, and victimization constitutes one of the most crucial challenges of the new millennium. To meet that challenge, reliable information is essential. Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report *offers a comprehensive overview of these pervasive problems and the response of the juvenile justice system. The* National Report *brings together statistics from a variety of sources on a wide array of topics, presenting the information in clear, nontechnical text enhanced by more than 350 easy-to-read tables, graphs, and maps.*

This Bulletin series is designed to give readers quick, focused access to some of the most critical findings from the wealth of data in the National Report. *Each Bulletin in the series highlights selected themes at the forefront of juvenile justice policymaking and extracts relevant* National Report *sections (including selected graphs and tables).*

Administrator's Message

Minority juveniles are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system, including secure confinement facilities. This overrepresentation is likely a result of a number of complex factors that command our full attention in order to address the roots of the problem.

National statistics on the racial and ethnic makeup of juvenile offenders from arrest, court processing, and confinement that are presented in this Bulletin paint a compelling picture that raises some fundamental questions: Why is the number of minority youth in the juvenile justice system so out of proportion to their representation in the general population? Is the juvenile justice system equipped to provide prevention services, appropriate interventions, and alternatives to secure confinement for all juvenile offenders?

The most recent statistics available reveal significant racial and ethnic disparity in the confinement of juvenile offenders. In 1997, minorities made up about one-third of the juvenile population nationwide but accounted for nearly two-thirds of the detained and committed population in secure juvenile facilities. For black juveniles, the disparities were most evident. While black juveniles ages 10 to 17 made up about 15% of the juvenile population, they accounted for 26% of juveniles arrested and 45% of delinquency cases involving detention. About one-third of adjudicated cases involved black youth, yet 40% of juveniles in secure residential placements were black. These are numbers that cannot be ignored.

Since 1988, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act has required States that receive Formula Grants program funding to determine whether the proportion of juvenile minorities in confinement exceeds their proportion of the population and, if so, to develop corrective strategies. In 1992, Congress strengthened the national commitment to addressing disproportionate confinement of minority youth in secure facilities by elevating this issue to a "core requirement" of the JJDP Act. OJJDP, in partnership with State Formula Grants program agencies, has taken the lead in building a constituency for change at the national, State, and local levels to develop solutions to disproportionate minority confinement.

Disproportionate minority confinement sends a signal that we need to take a closer look at how our society treats minority children, not just those who become offenders. Providing all youth with an equal opportunity to learn, thrive, and achieve at every stage of their lives is the best guarantee of a safe and prosperous future for our Nation.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator

OJJDP

UD 033272

Disproportionate minority confinement often stems from disparity at early stages of case processing

Federal requirements focus attention on disproportionate minority confinement

Under the "disproportionate minority confinement" requirement in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, States must determine whether the proportion of minorities in confinement exceeds their proportion in the population. If such overrepresentation is found, States must demonstrate efforts to reduce it.

Overrepresentation, disparity, and discrimination have different meanings

Overrepresentation refers to a situation in which a larger proportion of a particular group is present at various stages within the juvenile justice system (such as intake, detention, adjudication, and disposition) than would be expected based on their proportion in the general population.

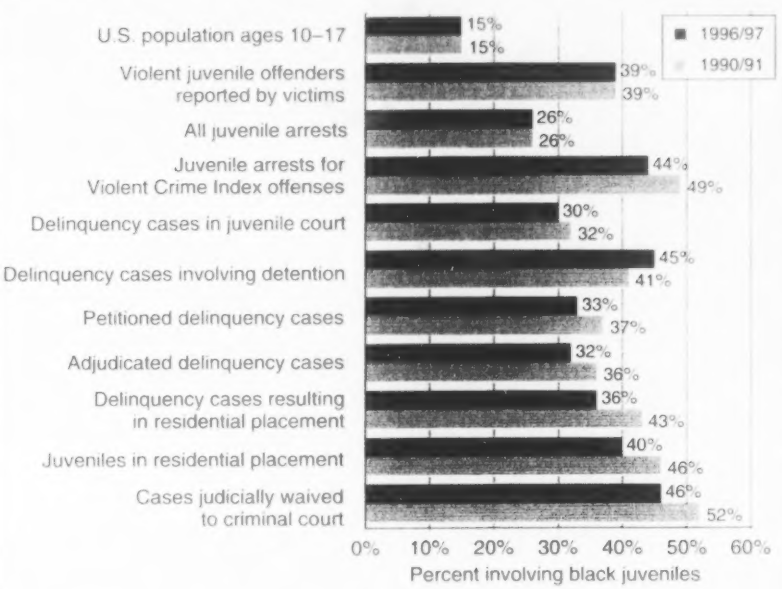
Disparity means that the probability of receiving a particular outcome (for example, being detained in a short-term facility vs. not being detained) differs for different groups. Disparity may in turn lead to overrepresentation.

Discrimination occurs if and when juvenile justice system decisionmakers treat one group of juveniles differently from another group of juveniles based wholly, or in part, on their gender, racial, and/or ethnic status.

Neither overrepresentation nor disparity necessarily implies discrimination

One possible explanation for disparity and overrepresentation is, of course, discrimination. This line of reasoning suggests that because of discrimination on the part of justice system decisionmakers, minority youth face higher probabilities of being arrested by the police, referred to court intake, held in short-term detention, petitioned for formal processing, adjudicated delinquent, and confined in a secure juvenile facility. Thus, differential actions throughout the justice system may account for minority overrepresentation.

Black juveniles are overrepresented at all stages of the juvenile justice system, compared with their proportion in the population



- Nationally, for most stages of juvenile justice system processing, the black proportion was smaller in 1996/97 than in 1990/91.

Sources: Authors' analysis of Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files] for 1991 and 1997, Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey* [machine-readable data files] for 1991 and 1996, FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1991 and 1997, OJJDP's *Juvenile court statistics* reports for 1991 and 1996, OJJDP's *Children in Custody Census of public and private juvenile detention, correctional, and shelter facilities 1990/91* [machine-readable data file], and OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

Overrepresentation of black juveniles occurs at all stages of the juvenile justice system. In 1996–97, while 26% of juveniles arrested were black, they made up 45% of cases involving detention. Thirty-two percent of adjudicated cases involved black youth, yet 40% of juveniles in residential placement are black. Even recognizing the overrepresentation of black juveniles involved in violent crimes reported by victims (39%), they still accounted for a disproportionate share of juvenile arrests for violent crime (44%) and confinement (45%).

Disparity and overrepresentation, however, can result from factors other than discrimination. Factors relating to the nature and volume of crime committed by minority youth may explain disproportionate minority confinement. This line of reasoning suggests that if minority youth commit proportionately more crime than white youth, are involved in more serious incidents, and have more extensive criminal histories, they will be overrepresented in secure facilities, even if no discrimination by system decisionmakers occurred. Thus, minority youth may be overrepresented within the juvenile justice system because of behavioral and legal factors.

In any given jurisdiction, either or both of these causes of disparity may be operating. Detailed data analysis is necessary to build a strong case for one or the other causal scenario. On a national level, such detailed analysis is not possible with the data that are available. For example, national data use broad offense categories—such as robbery, which includes both felony and nonfelony robberies. More severe outcomes would be expected for juveniles charged with felony robbery. Disparity in decisions regarding transfer to criminal court would result if one group of offenders had a higher proportion of felony robberies than another group (since transfer provisions are often limited to felony offenses). The national data, however, do not support analysis that controls for offense at the felony/nonfelony level of detail. Similarly, although prior criminal record is the basis for many justice system decisions, criminal history data are not available nationally.

Thus, at the national level, questions regarding the causes of observed disparity and overrepresentation remain unanswered.

There is substantial evidence of widespread disparity in juvenile case processing

While research findings are not completely consistent, data available for most jurisdictions across the country show that minority (especially black) youth are overrepresented within the juvenile justice system, particularly in secure facilities. These data further suggest that minority youth are more likely to be placed in public secure facilities, while white youth are more likely to be housed in private facilities or diverted from the juvenile justice system. Some research also suggests that differences in the offending rates of white and minority youth cannot explain the minority overrepresentation in arrest, conviction, and incarceration counts.

Further, there is substantial evidence that minority youth are often treated differently from majority youth within the juvenile justice system. In a review by Pope and Feyerherm of existing research literature, approximately two-thirds of the studies examined showed that racial and/or ethnic status did influence decisionmaking within the juvenile justice system. Since that review, a rather large body of research has accumulated across numerous geographic regions that reinforces these earlier findings. Thus, existing research suggests that race/ethnicity does make a difference in juvenile justice decisions in some jurisdictions at least some of the time.

Because juvenile justice systems are fragmented and administered at the local level, racial/ethnic differences exist in some jurisdictions but not in others. One would not expect research findings to be consistent, given variation across timeframes and regions.

Racial/ethnic differences occur at various decision points within the juvenile justice system

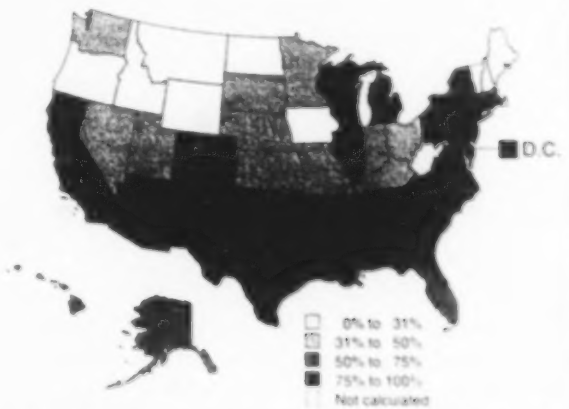
Pope and Feyerherm found that when racial/ethnic effects do occur, they can be found at any stage of processing within the juvenile justice system. Across numerous jurisdictions, however, a substantial body of research suggests that disparity is most pronounced at the beginning stages. The greatest disparity between majority and minority youth court processing outcomes occurs at intake and detention decision points. Existing research also suggests that when racial/ethnic differences are found, they tend to accumulate as youth are processed through the justice system.

Pope and Feyerherm found that research reveals substantial variation across rural, suburban, and urban areas. Correspondingly, the concept of "justice by geography" introduced by Feld suggests that there are marked differences in outcome depending on the jurisdiction in which the youth is processed. For example, cases in urban jurisdictions are more likely to receive severe outcomes at various stages of processing than are cases in nonurban areas. Because minority populations are concentrated in urban areas, this effect may work to the disadvantage of minority youth and result in greater overrepresentation.

In nearly all States, a disproportionate number of minorities were in residential placement in 1997

State*	Minority proportion: 1997 Juvenile population	Committed: Public	Committed: Private	Detained
U.S. total	**34%**	**67%**	**55%**	**62%**
Alabama	35	69	58	60
Alaska	35	47	67	57
Arizona	43	63	45	56
Arkansas	25	62	56	67
California	59	81	70	70
Colorado	28	56	56	51
Connecticut	26	83	59	77
Delaware	31	75	79	77
Dist. of Columbia	87	100	–	100
Florida	40	58	63	64
Georgia	40	70	68	70
Hawaii	76	89	–	–
Idaho	13	25	12	4
Illinois	36	70	52	78
Indiana	14	41	31	38
Iowa	7	42	23	27
Kansas	17	52	32	49
Kentucky	11	40	24	38
Louisiana	44	81	74	76
Maine	3	5	–	7
Maryland	40	68	75	73
Massachusetts	22	64	59	60
Michigan	23	56	57	61
Minnesota	12	46	42	59
Mississippi	47	70	–	62
Missouri	18%	40%	34%	64%
Montana	13	29	19	–
Nebraska	14	40	45	44
Nevada	35	50	–	39
New Hampshire	4	12	12	–
New Jersey	37	88	–	79
New Mexico	62	81	–	82
New York	41	87	51	81
North Carolina	33	68	36	60
North Dakota	11	–	29	31
Ohio	18	49	38	51
Oklahoma	26	49	51	60
Oregon	16	29	28	23
Pennsylvania	18	63	66	51
Rhode Island	18	63	38	49
South Carolina	40	69	58	67
South Dakota	17	43	–	46
Tennessee	24	52	52	51
Texas	53	78	73	77
Utah	12	34	33	28
Vermont	3	–	–	–
Virginia	32	64	63	66
Washington	21	41	44	41
West Virginia	5	28	27	26
Wisconsin	15	60	39	36
Wyoming	12	27	15	–

- Nationally, minorities accounted for 34% of the juvenile population in 1997.
- Minorities accounted for 67% of juveniles committed to public facilities nationwide—a proportion nearly twice their proportion of the juvenile population.
- Minorities accounted for 62% of juveniles detained nationwide.
- Minority proportions were somewhat lower for youth committed to private facilities than to public facilities.
- In seven States, the minority proportion of the *total* population of juveniles in residential placement was 75% or greater: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas (map).



*State where the offense occurred.

– Too few juveniles in category to calculate a reliable percentage.

Note: U.S. total includes 3,401 juveniles in private facilities for whom State of offense was not reported. Minorities include blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders. The juvenile population is the number of juveniles ages 0–17.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

Self-reported delinquent and deviant behaviors of youth varied by race and ethnicity

Recent participation (i.e., within the last 12 months or 30 days prior to the interview) in delinquent and deviant acts varied by race and ethnicity for males and females

Behavior	Males ages 12–16			Females ages 12–16		
	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic
Smoked cigarettes						
Last 30 days	22%	14%	19%	23%	9%	15%
Drank alcohol						
Last 30 days	23	13	22	23	13	20
Before or during school or work in last 30 days	6	4	6	4	3	6
Used marijuana						
Last 30 days	10	9	9	9	5	9
Before or during school or work in last 30 days	4	4	5	3	2	3
Carried a handgun						
Last 12 months	10	8	8	2	2	2
Last 30 days	5	5	4	1	1	1
To school in last 30 days	< 1	1	1	0	0	< 1
Had sex						
Last 12 months*	17	38	26	20	26	19
Belonged to a gang						
Last 12 months	2	6	5	1	2	2
Destroyed property						
Last 12 months	21	18	17	11	10	11
Stole something worth over $50						
Last 12 months	7	7	8	3	4	4
Committed assault						
Last 12 months	15	21	13	7	12	10

- Black males and females were significantly less likely to drink or smoke cigarettes in the month preceding the interview than their white and Hispanic peers.
- Among youth age 14 and older, a greater proportion of black males and females had sex in the 12 months before the survey than either white or Hispanic males and females.
- In the year preceding the interview, white males were less likely to have been in a gang than black and Hispanic males but more likely to have carried a gun.
- The proportion of youth who used marijuana in the last 30 days was the same for white, black, and Hispanic males, while black females were less likely to have used marijuana in the last month than their white and Hispanic peers.

*Only youth 14 and older were asked about their sexual activity.

Note: The white and black racial categories do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanic youth can be of any race.

Source: Authors' analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997* [machine-readable data file].

A new self-report survey documents delinquent and deviant behaviors of youth

The first wave of the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97) interviewed a nationally representative sample of 9,000 youth who were between the ages of 12 and 16 at year-end 1996. The survey asked youth to report whether they had engaged in a variety of deviant and delinquent behaviors. Plans are to interview members of this cohort every 2 years to track changes in delinquent and criminal activity over the life course.

Less than one-tenth (8%) of youth ages 12–16 said they had ever been arrested

Of the 8% of youth who had ever been arrested, a substantial proportion (40%, or 3% of all youth) reported two or more arrests.

The proportion of youth ever arrested varied significantly by race and ethnicity for males but not for females

White males (9%) were less likely to have ever been arrested than black males (13%) or Hispanic males (12%). Further, a greater proportion of black males (7%) and Hispanic males (6%) than white males (4%) were arrested more than once.

Equal proportions of white (5%), black (6%), and Hispanic (7%) females had ever been arrested. In addition, white (2%), black (2%), and Hispanic (3%) females were equally likely to have been arrested more than once.

Juvenile arrests disproportionately involved minorities

Black youth accounted for 15% of the juvenile population in 1997 but 26% of all juvenile arrests and 44% of arrests for violent offenses

Most serious offense charged	1997 juvenile arrest estimates	Percent of total juvenile arrests					
		Female	Ages 16–17	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	**2,838,300**	**26%**	**48%**	**71%**	**26%**	**1%**	**2%**
Violent Crime Index	123,400	16	51	53	44	1	2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	2,500	6	74	40	58	0	2
Forcible rape	5,500	2	45	56	42	1	1
Robbery	39,500	9	54	42	55	1	2
Aggravated assault	75,900	21	49	60	38	1	1
Property Crime Index	701,500	28	41	70	27	1	2
Burglary	131,000	10	43	73	24	1	2
Larceny-theft	493,900	34	40	70	26	1	2
Motor vehicle theft	66,600	16	51	59	37	2	2
Arson	10,000	11	20	79	19	1	1
Nonindex							
Other assaults	241,800	29	41	63	34	1	1
Forgery and counterfeiting	8,500	39	75	77	20	1	2
Fraud	11,300	35	71	69	29	1	1
Embezzlement	1,400	45	88	63	34	1	2
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	39,500	13	54	60	37	1	2
Vandalism	136,500	12	38	80	17	1	1
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	52,200	9	51	64	33	1	2
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1,400	56	70	60	39	1	1
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	18,500	9	33	70	28	1	1
Drug abuse violations	220,700	13	66	64	34	1	1
Gambling	2,600	3	69	10	89	0	1
Offenses against family and children	10,200	37	45	76	20	1	2
Driving under the influence	19,600	17	93	91	6	2	1
Liquor laws	158,500	30	74	90	5	3	1
Drunkenness	24,100	17	72	89	9	2	1
Disorderly conduct	215,100	26	46	64	34	1	1
Vagrancy	3,100	15	56	68	31	1	0
All other offenses (except traffic)	468,000	24	53	72	25	1	2
Suspicion	1,600	23	60	60	39	0	1
Curfew and loitering law violations	182,700	31	48	75	23	1	1
Runaways	196,100	58	33	77	18	1	4
U.S. population ages 10–17	30,640,000	49	25	79	15	1	4

- The racial composition of the juvenile population in 1997 was approximately 80% white, 15% black, and 5% other races, with most juveniles of Hispanic ethnicity being classified as white. In 1997, in contrast to the proportions in the general population, 53% of juvenile arrests for violent crimes involved white youth and 44% involved black youth. In contrast to their proportion in the general population, black youth were involved in more than half of the arrests for gambling (89%), murder (58%), and robbery (55%).

Notes: FBI Uniform Crime Report data do not distinguish the ethnic group Hispanic; Hispanics may be of any race. In 1997, 91% of Hispanics ages 10–17 were classified racially as white. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of data presented in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*. National estimates of juvenile arrests were developed using FBI estimates of total arrests and juvenile arrest proportions in reporting sample.

In 1996, black juveniles were referred to juvenile court at a rate more than double that for whites

The offense profiles of white caseloads and black caseloads differ

Caseloads of black juveniles contained a greater proportion of person offenses than did caseloads of white juveniles and those of other races. Property offense cases accounted for the largest proportion of cases for all racial groups, although among black juveniles, property cases accounted for fewer than half of the cases processed in 1996. For all races, drug offense cases accounted for the smallest proportion of the 1996 caseload.

Most serious offense	White	Black	Other races
1996			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Person	19	27	20
Property	53	42	57
Drugs	10	11	6
Public order	18	20	17
1987			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Person	13	24	14
Property	63	53	66
Drugs	6	7	5
Public order	18	15	16

Caseload offense profiles for 1996 differed from offense profiles for 1987 for all racial groups. Regardless of race, the proportion of cases involving person offenses was greater in 1996 than in 1987. Among black juveniles, person offenses increased 3 percentage points. Among white juveniles and those of other races, person offenses increased 6 percentage points.

Black juveniles were involved in a disproportionate number of delinquency cases in 1996

Most serious offense	White	Black	Other races	Total
Total				
Delinquency cases	66%	30%	4%	100%
Person	59	38	4	100
Property	70	26	4	100
Drugs	65	33	3	100
Public order	64	32	4	100
Male				
Delinquency cases	66	31	4	100
Person	60	37	4	100
Property	70	26	4	100
Drugs	62	36	2	100
Public order	64	32	3	100
Female				
Delinquency cases	67	29	4	100
Person	57	39	4	100
Property	71	24	5	100
Drugs	81	15	3	100
Public order	64	33	4	100
Juvenile population	80%	15%	5%	100%

- Overall, the level of racial disparity did not change substantially between the stages of arrest and juvenile court intake.
- Although two-thirds of delinquency cases involve white youth, black youth were overrepresented in the delinquency caseload, given their proportion of the juvenile population (age 10 through upper age).
- The overrepresentation of black juveniles was greatest for cases involving person offenses.
- Among females, the racial distribution of drug cases was similar to the racial distribution of the juvenile population.
- Overrepresentation of blacks was somewhat greater in 1996 than in 1987. In 1987, black youth accounted for 27% of delinquency cases overall, 40% of person offense cases, 24% of property offense cases, 31% of drug offense cases, and 24% of public order offense cases.

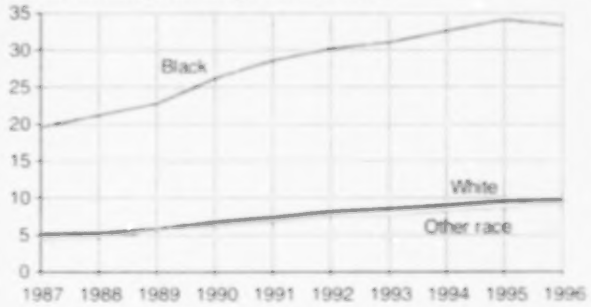
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding. Nearly all juveniles of Hispanic ethnicity are included in the white racial category.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*

From 1987 through 1996, case rates increased for all racial groups in all offense categories; rates for black juveniles remain well above those for whites and for those of other races

Person offense case rates

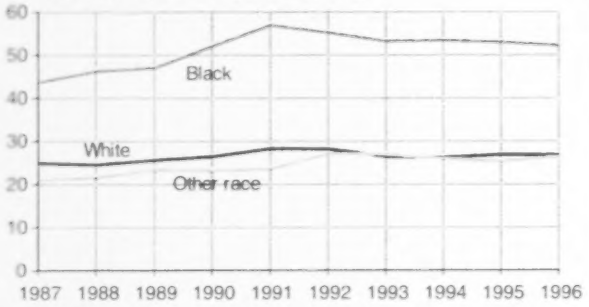
Cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10-upper age



- Each year between 1987 and 1996, the person offense case rate for black juveniles was more than three times the rates for white juveniles and those of other races, although the gap narrowed over the years.
- The rate for black juveniles increased 69%, compared with 86% for white juveniles and 107% for those of other races.

Property offense case rates

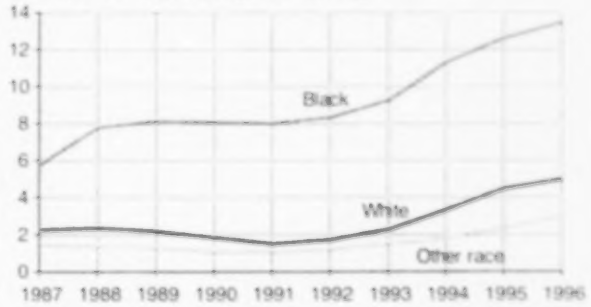
Cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10-upper age



- From 1987 through 1996, the property offense case rates for whites and other races were about half the rates for blacks.
- For all racial groups, property offense case rates were at their peak in the early 1990's. The subsequent decline for black juveniles (8%) and white juveniles (6%) was similar.

Drug offense case rates

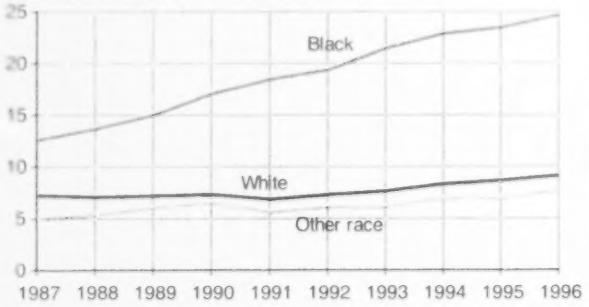
Cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10-upper age



- Between 1988 and 1991, the drug case rate remained virtually unchanged for black juveniles, but dropped 36% for white juveniles and 23% for those of other races.
- All racial groups had large increases in drug case rates between 1991 and 1996: 116% for whites, 132% for blacks, and 167% for youth of other races.

Public order offense case rates

Cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10-upper age



- Between 1987 and 1996, the public order case rates for whites and other races were less than half the rates for blacks.
- The increase in the public order case rate between 1987 and 1996 was substantially greater for black juveniles (94%) than for white juveniles (26%) or juveniles of other races (52%).

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

White juveniles were less likely to be detained than black juveniles and juveniles of other races

White youth were least likely to be detained

Secure detention was nearly twice as likely in 1996 for cases involving black youth as for cases involving whites, even after controlling for offense. Detention was least likely for cases involving white youth charged with property crimes. Detention was most likely for cases involving black youth charged with drug offenses.

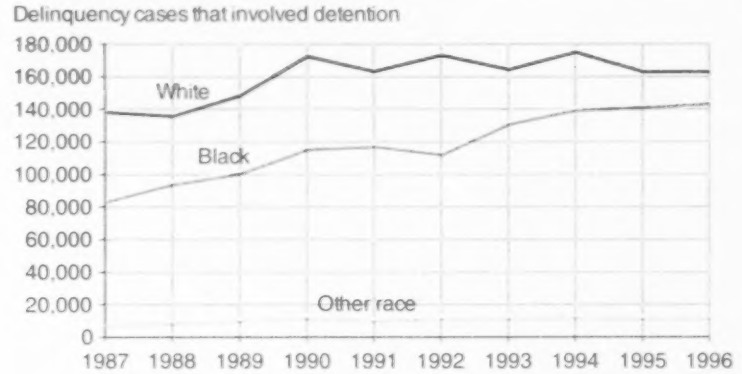
Most serious offense	Percent of cases that involved detention in 1996		
	White	Black	Other races
Delinquency	14%	27%	18%
Person	19	28	26
Property	11	22	15
Drugs	14	40	19
Public order	17	29	17

For blacks, growth in detained cases outpaced growth in delinquency cases overall

For black youth, the relative increase in the number of delinquency cases involving detention was greater than the relative increase in delinquency cases overall. For white juveniles and juveniles of other races, growth in the overall delinquency caseload was greater than growth in the detention caseload.

Race	Percent change 1987–1996	
	All cases	Detained cases
All races	49%	38%
White	39	18
Black	68	71
Other races	103	50

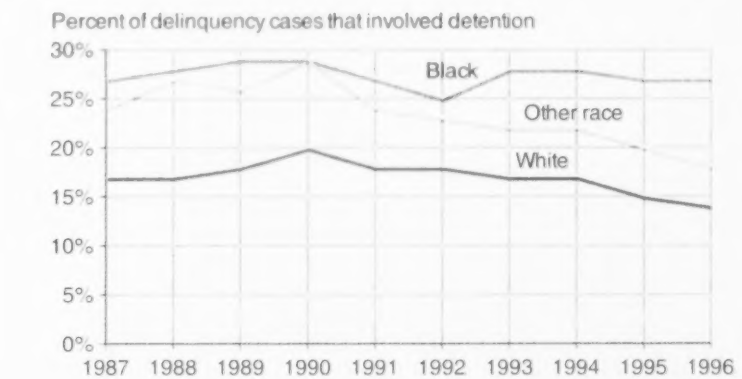
For black juveniles, the relative increase in the number of cases involving detention was nearly four times the increase for whites



- For white juveniles, the number of delinquency cases involving detention increased 18% from 1987 to 1996. For black juveniles, the increase was 71%. For youth of other races, the increase was 50%.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

Compared with 1987, the use of detention in delinquency cases in 1996 remained about the same for black juveniles but declined for white juveniles and juveniles of other races



Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

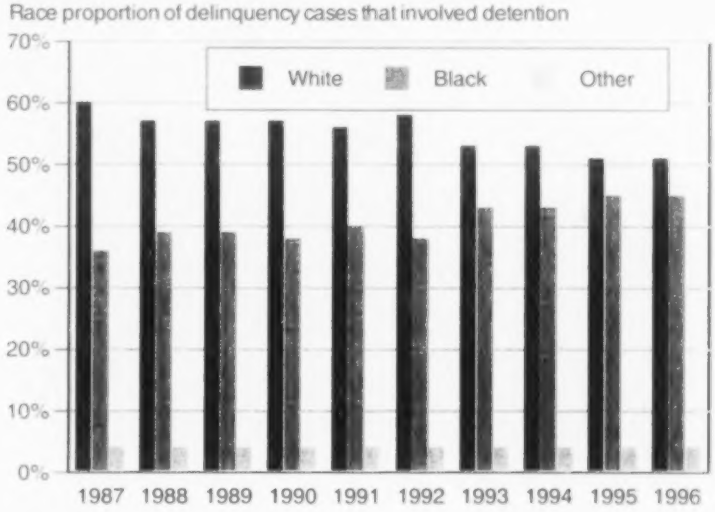
Black youth were overrepresented in detention caseloads in 1996

As a result of their greater probability of detention in 1996, black youth were overrepresented in the detention caseload, compared with their proportions in the overall delinquency caseload. While black youth made up 30% of all delinquency cases processed in 1996, they were involved in 45% of detained cases. This overrepresentation was greatest for drug offenses: blacks accounted for 33% of all drug cases processed, but 59% of drug cases detained.

	Percent of cases that involved black juveniles in 1996	
Most serious offense	All cases	Detained cases
Delinquency	30%	45%
Person	38	46
Property	26	40
Drugs	33	59
Public order	32	45

In all offense categories, youth of other races made up less than 5% of all cases processed and of those involving detention.

Black juveniles accounted for a greater share of delinquency cases involving detention in 1996 than in 1987



- In 1987, blacks accounted for 36% of the detention caseload; by 1995, their proportion had increased to 45%, where it remained in 1996. Juveniles of other races remained at 4% of the detention caseload throughout the period from 1987 through 1996.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

Disproportionate minority confinement is a priority issue for OJJDP

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended (the Act), establishes four custody-related requirements. One of these core requirements is the "disproportionate confinement of minority youth" requirement (1992), which specifies that States determine the existence and extent of the problem in their State and demonstrate efforts to reduce it where it exists. States must agree to comply with requirements to receive Formula Grants under the Act's provisions. This includes submitting plans outlining their strategy for meeting these requirements. Noncompliance with the core requirements results in the loss of 25% of the State's annual Formula Grants program allocation.

As of 1998, 55 of 57 eligible States and territories are participating in the Formula Grants program. The vast majority are in compliance with the core requirements. (For more information on the disproportionate minority confinement requirement and other core requirements, see page 88 of *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*.)

Minorities accounted for 7 in 10 youth held in custody for a violent offense

More than 6 in 10 juveniles in residential placement were minority youth

In 1997, two-thirds of all juveniles in custody in public facilities were minorities as were just over half of all juveniles in private facilities.

Race/ ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997 Total	Public	Private
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	37	34	46
Minority	63	66	54
Black	40	40	39
Hispanic	18	21	11
Amer. Indian	2	1	2
Asian	2	2	2

The racial/ethnic profile of juveniles held in 1997 is similar to the profile of those held in 1995

Data from the 1995 Children in Custody census show race proportions similar to those derived from the CJRP data.

Race/ ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in custody on February 15, 1995 Total	Public	Private
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	37	32	53
Minority	63	68	47
Black	40	43	34
Hispanic	19	21	10
Amer. Indian	2	1	2
Asian	2	3	1

In 1995, more than two-thirds of all juveniles in custody in public facilities were minorities as were just under half of all juveniles in private facilities.

Non-Hispanic black juveniles account for 55% of juveniles in residential placement for robbery but only 30% of juveniles in residential placement for a status offense

Most serious offense	Percent of juvenile offenders in residential placement on October 29, 1997 Total	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
Total juveniles in residential placement	100%	37%	40%	18%	2%	2%
Delinquency	100	36	41	19	1	2
Person	100	31	43	21	1	3
Criminal homicide	100	19	44	30	2	5
Sexual assault	100	51	33	12	2	1
Robbery	100	16	55	24	1	3
Aggravated assault	100	26	41	26	2	4
Simple assault	100	41	38	16	2	2
Other person	100	41	40	15	1	2
Property	100	43	35	17	2	2
Burglary	100	46	32	18	2	2
Theft	100	45	37	15	1	1
Auto theft	100	36	38	20	2	3
Arson	100	52	29	17	1	1
Other property	100	42	38	16	1	2
Drug	100	23	56	19	1	1
Trafficking	100	14	64	21	<1	1
Other drug	100	26	54	18	1	1
Public order	100	38	38	20	2	2
Weapons	100	24	45	27	1	3
Other public order	100	48	33	15	2	2
Technical violation	100	40	37	19	2	1
Violent Crime Index*	100	27	45	23	1	3
Property Crime Index**	100	43	35	17	2	2
Status offense	100	59	30	7	2	1

- Non-Hispanic black juveniles accounted for more than 6 in 10 juveniles in residential placement for drug trafficking and more than 5 in 10 in residential placement for other drug offenses.
- Non-Hispanic white juveniles accounted for the majority of juveniles in residential placement for sexual assault, arson, and status offenses.

Note: Race proportions do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

*Includes criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.

**Includes burglary, theft, auto theft, and arson.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

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Fewer than 3 in 10 non-Hispanic white juveniles were placed for a person offense, compared with nearly 4 in 10 Hispanic juveniles and non-Hispanic black juveniles

Most serious offense	Percent of juvenile offenders in residential placement on October 29, 1997					
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
Total juveniles in residential placement	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Delinquency	93	90	95	97	91	97
Person	33	28	36	38	32	45
Criminal homicide	2	1	2	3	2	5
Sexual assault	5	7	4	4	5	2
Robbery	9	4	12	12	6	15
Aggravated assault	9	6	9	13	10	16
Simple assault	6	7	6	5	8	5
Other person	2	2	2	2	1	2
Property	30	35	27	28	32	32
Burglary	12	14	10	12	13	13
Theft	7	8	6	5	6	4
Auto theft	6	6	6	7	8	10
Arson	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other property	4	5	4	4	3	4
Drug	9	5	12	9	4	4
Trafficking	3	1	5	3	0	1
Other drug	6	4	7	6	4	3
Public order	9	9	9	10	9	9
Weapons	4	3	4	6	3	5
Other public order	5	7	5	4	7	4
Technical violation	12	13	11	12	14	8
Violent Crime Index*	25	18	28	31	23	38
Property Crime Index**	26	30	22	24	29	28
Status offense	7	10	5	3	9	3

- Robbery was the most serious offense for a greater proportion of black, Hispanic, and Asian juveniles than white or American Indian juveniles in residential placement.
- Drug offenses were the most serious offense for a greater proportion of black juveniles than other juveniles in residential placement.

Note: Race proportions do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

*Includes criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.

**Includes burglary, theft, auto theft, and arson.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

Half of females in residential placement were minorities

Minorities were somewhat less disproportionate in the female custody population than in the male custody population.

Race/ ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	37	36	49
Minority	63	64	51
Black	40	41	33
Hispanic	18	19	13
Amer. Indian	2	1	2
Asian	2	2	1

Females accounted for a slightly greater proportion of white than minority youth in custody

The female proportion of juveniles in residential placement varied by race and ethnicity. Females accounted for 18% of nonminority white juveniles in residential placement. Among minorities overall, females accounted for 11% of juveniles in residential placement; however, the female proportion was 21% for American Indians and only 9% for Hispanics and Asians.

Race/ ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Male	Female
Total	100%	86%	14%
White	100	82	18
Minority	100	89	11
Black	100	89	11
Hispanic	100	91	9
Amer. Indian	100	79	21
Asian	100	91	9

On the 1997 census day, minority offenders had been in residential placement longer than other juveniles

Juveniles in residential placement

Information on length of stay is key to understanding the justice system's handling of juveniles in residential placement. The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP), first conducted in October 1997, captures information on the number of days since admission for each juvenile in residential placement up until the date of the census. The CJRP looks both at juveniles detained while awaiting adjudication or disposition and committed juveniles (those adjudicated, disposed, and placed in the facility). While the data cannot determine complete length of stay, the CJRP does provide an overall profile of the time juveniles had been in the facility at the time of the census—a 1-day snapshot of time in the facility. The CJRP also collects individual-level data regarding juveniles in facilities, providing juvenile justice policymakers with a more complete look at who is in the facilities and how long they have been detained or committed.

Minorities had been in facilities longer than nonminority whites

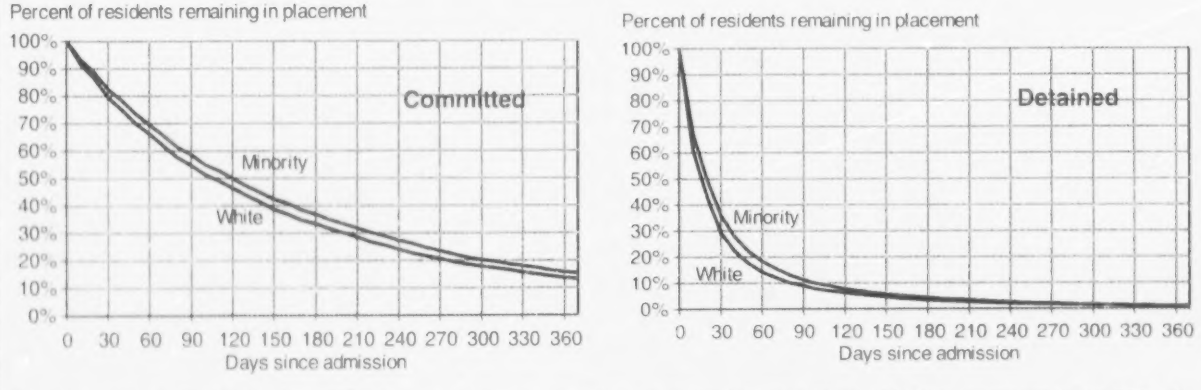
Among committed juveniles, minorities had been in the facility an average of 193 days. In comparison, committed nonminority whites had been in the facility an average of 174 days—2 weeks less. A similar pattern was found among detained juveniles. Detained minority juveniles had been in the facility an average of 1 week longer than nonminority whites (43 days vs. 36 days).

Demographic differences in time in the facility reflect differences in offense profiles

Juveniles held for violent offenses had been in placement longer on average than other juveniles. Overall, committed delinquents had been in the facility an average of just over 6 months (186 days). Juveniles committed for Violent Crime Index offenses, in comparison, had been in the facility an average of nearly 9 months (266 days). Findings were similar for detained juveniles.

A closer look at the 1997 CJRP finding that minority youth had been in placement longer than their nonminority white counterparts indicates this finding is attributable to differences in offense profiles: minorities had larger proportions of person offenders, particularly violent person offenders, in their population. Within individual offense categories, demographic differences in time in the facility were negligible.

Half of committed minority juveniles had been in the facility at least 17 weeks—half of committed whites had been held at least 15 weeks



- Among committed juveniles, 37% of minority juveniles had been in the facility at least 180 days, compared with 33% of nonminority white juveniles.
- Among the detained population, 36% of minority juveniles had been in the facility at least 30 days, compared with 29% of nonminority white juveniles.

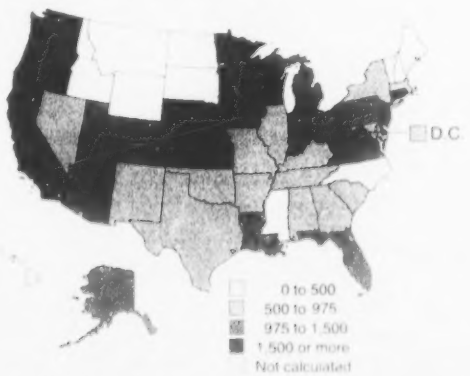
Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

Nationally, custody rates for black juveniles were substantially higher than rates for other groups

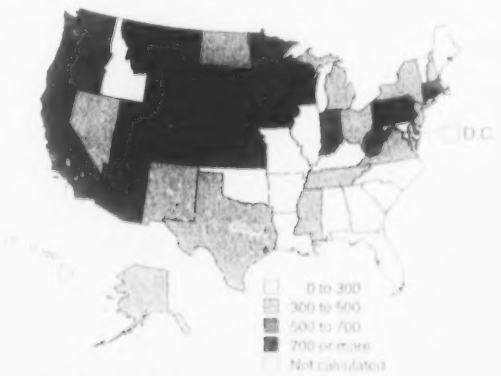
For every 100,000 non-Hispanic black juveniles in the population, 1,018 were in a residential placement facility on October 29, 1997—for Hispanics the rate was 515, and for non-Hispanic whites it was 204

	Custody rate (per 100,000)						Custody rate (per 100,000)				
State*	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian	State*	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
U.S. total	**204**	**1,018**	**515**	**525**	**203**	Missouri	168	741	241	43	69
Alabama	202	650	285	130	96	Montana	221	–	768	524	–
Alaska	289	1,055	372	734	352	Nebraska	234	1,754	716	1,417	177
Arizona	244	975	515	214	74	Nevada	382	942	448	1,250	297
Arkansas	106	533	111	0	45	New Hampshire	143	–	479	0	266
California	299	1,819	654	548	268	New Jersey	71	1,007	405	246	18
Colorado	238	1,397	705	617	206	New Mexico	169	905	498	220	251
Connecticut	160	2,225	1,276	–	90	New York	152	886	394	603	53
Delaware	132	1,195	582	0	0	North Carolina	108	435	32	140	97
Dist. Of Columbia	0	855	204	0	0	North Dakota	261	–	391	1,203	0
Florida	243	980	203	108	109	Ohio	205	1,105	404	315	83
Georgia	240	952	129	61	121	Oklahoma	123	688	214	282	59
Hawaii	65	212	74	–	120	Oregon	326	1,505	681	1,046	267
Idaho	139	–	160	330	236	Pennsylvania	137	1,348	929	–	148
Illinois	127	943	240	459	39	Rhode Island	220	1,799	1,287	–	592
Indiana	268	1,168	521	58	53	South Carolina	238	753	0	0	30
Iowa	239	2,250	736	1,700	243	South Dakota	356	–	2,401	1,204	–
Kansas	249	1,767	596	604	475	Tennessee	226	843	415	209	133
Kentucky	174	967	78	–	100	Texas	155	853	383	203	94
Louisiana	231	1,140	157	119	300	Utah	188	1,400	713	693	561
Maine	210	–	198	–	265	Vermont	66	–	–	0	0
Maryland	123	592	263	115	46	Virginia	204	997	355	230	174
Massachusetts	96	804	582	79	224	Washington	246	1,592	520	787	201
Michigan	205	1,171	406	293	305	West Virginia	156	1,230	511	–	–
Minnesota	155	1,676	515	1,690	417	Wisconsin	206	1,756	801	448	668
Mississippi	129	319	336	60	283	Wyoming	454	–	846	1,243	–

Custody rate for black juveniles



Custody rate for Hispanic juveniles



*State where the offense occurred. – Too few juveniles in the population to calculate a reliable rate.

Note: The custody rate is the number of juveniles in residential placement per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 through the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction in each State. U.S. total includes 3,401 juveniles in private facilities for whom State of offense was not reported. Race rates do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file] and Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

Males, 17-year-olds, minorities, and person offenders predominate among youth sent to adult prisons

Youth under age 18 accounted for 2% of new court commitments to State adult prisons

Thirty-six States (containing 81% of the 1996 U.S. population ages 10–17) contributed data for 1992–1996 to the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP). These States reported approximately 5,600 new court commitments to their adult prison systems involving youth under 18. These youth accounted for nearly 2% of all new court commitments. Nearly 3 in 4 of these youth were 17 years old at admission. States with an upper age of juvenile jurisdiction below 17 accounted for half of all under-18 admissions.

The under-18 proportion of new admissions varied by offense

Under-18 youth accounted for 4% of new admissions for person offenses, 7% of new admissions for robbery, 5% of those for murder, and 3% of those for aggravated assault and weapons offenses. For all other offense categories, the under-18 proportion was 2% or less.

New court commitments to State prison:

Most serious offense	Under-18 proportion
All offenses	2%
Person	4
Murder	5
Sexual assault	1
Robbery	7
Aggravated assault	3
Property	2
Burglary	2
Larceny-theft	1
Motor vehicle theft	2
Arson	2
Drugs	1
Trafficking	1
Public order	1
Weapons	3

Note: General offense categories include offenses not detailed.

More than three-quarters of youth newly admitted to State prison were minorities

Minorities made up a greater proportion of new court commitments involving youth under age 18 than of those involving older offenders. Blacks accounted for the largest proportion of new prison admissions for both age groups.

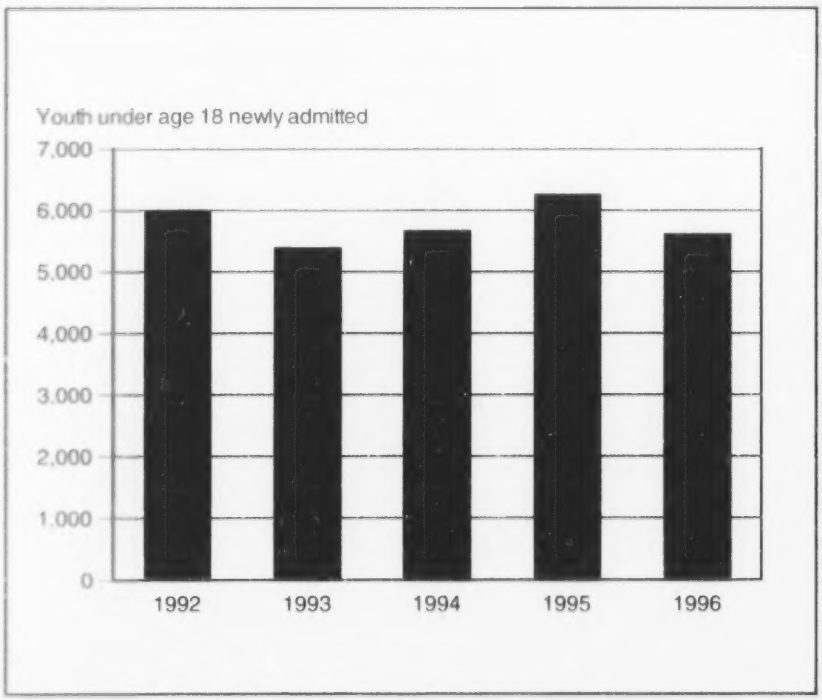
New court commitments to State prison:

	Age at admission	
Race/ethnicity	Under 18	18 or older
Total	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	23	35
Minority	77	65
Black	60	46
Hispanic	15	18
American Indian	1	1
Asian	1	<1

The minority proportion of new admissions varied by offense category. Drug offenses had the greatest proportion of minority admissions for both age groups.

New court commitments to State prison:

	Age at admission	
Most serious offense Race/ethnicity	Under 18	18 or older
Person	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	17	35
Minority	83	65
Property	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	46	46
Minority	54	54
Drugs	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	5	22
Minority	95	78
Public order	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	28	47
Minority	72	53



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Sources

Information for this Bulletin was taken/adapted from chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7 of *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*. For full listings of sources for these chapters, see pages 84, 140, 183, and 213 of the *National Report*.

Resources

Answers to frequently asked questions about juvenile justice statistics as well as periodic updates of data presented in *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report* are available on the Internet in the OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, which can be accessed through the OJJDP home page at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org through the JJ Facts & Figures prompt.

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Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report (NCJ 178257) is available online from the OJJDP Web site (www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org) under the JJ Facts & Figures section and the Publications section or can be ordered from OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse. Send an e-mail to puborder@ncjrs.org; call 800–638–8736 (select option 2); or write to the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849–6000. Be sure to ask for NCJ 178257.

For information on OJJDP initiatives related to the reduction of juvenile crime, violence, and victimization, contact the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC) at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org or call 800–638–8736.

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